

## ***FWP COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET***

**Meeting Date:** July 10, 2013

**Agenda Item:** Joiner Coulee Access Public Land Easement

**Division:** Wildlife

**Action Needed:** Endorse Course of Action

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 10 minutes

**Background:** The Joiner Coulee APL project would improve access to BLM and DNRC administered land in northern Phillips County. This is a moderate public use area known for mule deer, antelope and upland game bird hunting opportunities. There is an immense distribution of non-game wildlife, including grassland nesting songbirds, available for watching. The private landowner adjacent to the south boundary of the BLM has expressed an interest in reaching an agreement to establish a 1-mile road easement through the private property leading to a large block of BLM and DNRC land.

### **Public Involvement Process & Results**

An EA and subsequent public involvement is presently under development, pending FWP Commission endorsement.

### **Alternatives and Analysis**

**Proposed Action:** FWP proposes to purchase a permanent public access road easement from a willing landowner across private land to provide year round permanent public access to a large block of land managed by the BLM and DNRC. FWP would secure permanent public access to this land for hunting as well as hiking, camping, wildlife viewing and other outdoor recreational activities.

**No Action alternative:** FWP would forgo the opportunity to purchase a needed access easement, which would greatly reduce public access to BLM and DNRC property in this area. Should the property sell or the landowner have a change in management, public access would be lost or severely curtailed.

### **Agency Recommendation & Rationale**

FWP recommends approval by the FWP Commission to proceed with the public access road easement negotiation and purchase with a willing landowner. This project will provide public road access in perpetuity to BLM land in North Phillips County.

### **Proposed Motion**

I move the FWP Commission endorse the recommendation to begin negotiations for a permanent public access road easement to provide public access to land administered by the BLM and DNRC in North Phillips County.